

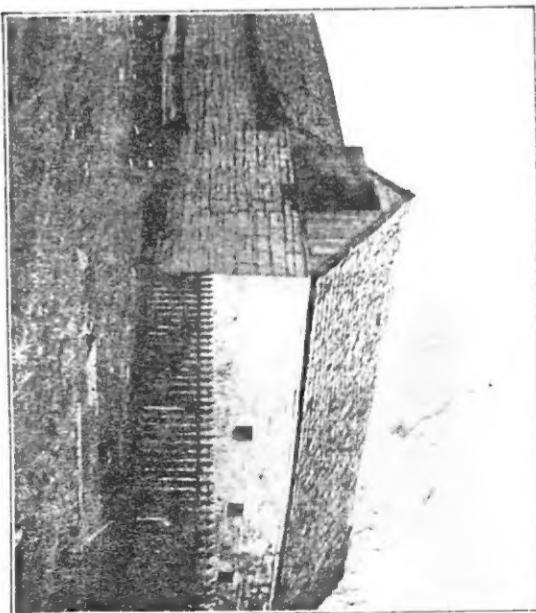
Willow Springs Pony Express
Station



PONY EXPRESS monuments like this one serve as reminders of an experiment in bringing mail service to the West. As noted on the plaque, the Willow Springs Pony Express Station was established April 3, 1860 on the route of the express between St. Joseph, Mo., and Sacramento, Calif. It was discontinued Oct. 27, 1861 when the transcontinental telegraph line was opened.

hay and grain over long distances. Colonel Alexander Majors, in his *Sixty Years on the Frontier*, says:

These stations dotted a wild, uninhabited expanse of country 2,000 miles wide, infested with warlike Indians, who trained in formidable hunting parties, ready to sacrifice human life with as little concern as they would slaughter a buffalo. The pony express was



The Pony Express Station

therefore not only important, but a daring and romantic enterprise. At each station, the thin, wiry, and hardy pony riders held themselves in readiness to press forward with the mails. These were filled with important business letters and press dispatches from the eastern cities and San Francisco, and were printed upon tissue paper, and thus especially adapted by their weight for this mode of transportation.

On March 20, 1860, the following advertisement appeared in the *Missouri Republican*: